

## University of Groningen

### Response to Arshad's letter on the assessment of professional behaviour in undergraduate medical education

Schönrock-Adema, Johanna; Heijne-Penninga, Marjolein; Duijn, Marijtje A.J. van; Cohen-Schotanus, Janke

*Published in:*  
Medical Education

*DOI:*  
[10.1111/j.1365-2923.2008.03014.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2923.2008.03014.x)

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

*Document Version*  
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

*Publication date:*  
2008

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

*Citation for published version (APA):*

Schönrock-Adema, J., Heijne-Penninga, M., Duijn, M. A. J. V., & Cohen-Schotanus, J. (2008). Response to Arshad's letter on the assessment of professional behaviour in undergraduate medical education. *Medical Education*, 42(3), 326. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2923.2008.03014.x>

#### Copyright

Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

The publication may also be distributed here under the terms of Article 25fa of the Dutch Copyright Act, indicated by the "Taverne" license. More information can be found on the University of Groningen website: <https://www.rug.nl/library/open-access/self-archiving-pure/taverne-amendment>.

#### Take-down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Downloaded from the University of Groningen/UMCG research database (Pure): <http://www.rug.nl/research/portal>. For technical reasons the number of authors shown on this cover page is limited to 10 maximum.

# Response to Arshad's letter on the assessment of professional behaviour in undergraduate medical education

Johanna Schönrock-Adema, Marjolein Heijne-Penninga, Marijtje A J van Duijn & Janke Cohen-Schotanus

Editor – We would like to thank our colleague for his letter concerning our paper.<sup>1</sup> The concern about the transferability of our findings outside the Netherlands represents a very important issue. Your correspondent's main reason for concern is that the Dutch definition of professional behaviour, and consequently the corresponding assessment criteria, differs from that in the UK. However, the focus of our study was not the content of the assessment criteria, but rather the principle of actively applying criteria in formative peer assessment. Using assessment criteria in peer assessment is an effective way of increasing awareness, deepening elaboration<sup>2</sup> and improving learning.<sup>3,4</sup> We expect this effect to be transferable to other learning situations, provided that students receive the appropriate assessment criteria, which in the UK would imply criteria measuring the level of expertise, ethics and service.

In our study, the novice medical students were students who had entered the problem-based learning curriculum for the first time. We distinguished novice students from repeaters, who were excluded from the statistical analysis to cancel out effects caused by previous

experience with the curriculum. Our findings suggest that experience with the learning environment is crucial for the effectiveness of peer assessment and that it may be wise to restrict the implementation of peer assessment to later phases of the curriculum in order to give novice students time to become accustomed to the curriculum. We would again like to emphasise that we did not exclude the repeaters from actual participation; we merely excluded their data from our analysis.

The students in our experiment were not trained in performing peer assessment. Although it may be a good idea to train students to assess peers, we found the peer assessment intervention to be effective even without such training.

Furthermore, we would like to react to the suggestion that peer assessment be implemented to mitigate the shortage in the number of tutors. Our study concerned formative peer assessment. We recommend caution when replacing tutor assessment by summative peer assessment as students may experience difficulties in assessing peers who function on a higher level than they do themselves<sup>5,6</sup> or in assessing objectively.

To conclude, we would like to emphasise that simply knowing the

assessment criteria and applying them actively may be the element that improves the learning process. Therefore, we expect this effect to be transferable to other learning situations, including those in the UK.

## REFERENCES

- 1 Schönrock-Adema J, Heijne-Penninga M, van Duijn MAJ, Geertsma J, Cohen-Schotanus J. Assessment of professional behaviour in undergraduate medical education: peer assessment enhances performance. *Med Educ* 2007;**41**:836–42.
- 2 Somervell H. Issues in assessment, enterprise and higher education: the case for self, peer and collaborative assessment. *Assess Eval High Educ* 1993;**18**:221–33.
- 3 Bruch M, Pearl L, Giordano S. Differences in the cognitive processes of academically successful and unsuccessful test-anxious students. *J Couns Psychol* 1986;**33**:217–9.
- 4 Svensson L. On qualitative differences in learning: III. Study skill and learning. *Br J Educ Psychol* 1977;**47**:233–43.
- 5 Sluijsmans DMA, Brand-Gruwel S, van Merriënboer JJG. Peer assessment training in teacher education: effects on performance and perceptions. *Assess Eval High Educ* 2002;**27**:443–54.
- 6 Cheng W, Warren M. Having second thoughts: student perceptions before and after a peer assessment exercise. *Stud High Educ* 1997;**22**:233–40.

Groningen, The Netherlands

Correspondence: Johanna Schönrock-Adema, A Deusinglaan 1, 9713 AV Groningen, The Netherlands. Tel: 00 31 50 363 83 78; Fax: 00 31 50 363 73 90; E-mail: j.schonrock-adema@med.umcg.nl

10.1111/j.1365-2923.2008.03014.x